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# Inside Information

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of Agriculture

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## USDA COMMUNICATOR NAMED NAGC PRESIDENT

Brenda Curtis-Heiken, public affairs specialist in the Radio & Television Division of USDA's Office of Information, was named president of the National Association of Government Communicators at the organization's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., last week.

Curtis was NAGC vice president for administration the past year and has been instrumental in a revitalization of the 600-plus member organization of communicators from federal, state and local governments across the nation.

She is the second USDA communicator to be selected as president of the organization. Nelson Fitton, chief of the Publishing Division in the Office of Information, was president three years ago and recipient of this year's NAGC "communicator of the year" award (see story on page 3).

Curtis has been with USDA's Radio and Television Division for a number of years. She previously worked in radio at the U.S. Department of Commerce, and had some commercial radio experience.

Election of Curtis as president of NAGC makes for two USDA communicators who head up national communications organizations.

Larry Quinn, chief of the Video & Film Division in the Office of Information, is currently serving as president of Agricultural Communicators in Education, an international organization of ag communicators in USDA, land grant universities and others, also totaling over 600 members. He was named prexy at the national ACE conference in Washington, D.C., last June.

Quinn served as one of the key speakers at the NAGC conference and moderated one of the workshop panels on the "cutting edge of technology."

Vince Phillips, another USDA communicator, from the Secretary's Office of Public Liaison, served as NAGC conference chairman.

Both professional organizations are soliciting membership. Annual membership fee for ACE is \$45 and for NAGC \$35.

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## SEVERAL CORNELL COMMUNICATORS HONORED

Six awards announced this month at the annual conference of the State University of New York Council for University Affairs and Development were for members of the Media Services' staff at Cornell University.

The printed and visual communications section of Media Services won four awards in the publication design category:

- designers Martha de Lyra and Lorraine Heasley were cited in the magazine competition for the recent "Power To The Family" issue of HUMAN ECOLOGY FORUM, a quarterly scholarly magazine;

- Linda Haylor and Heasley were honored, also in the magazine competition, for the recent "Technology Transfer" issue of New York's FOOD AND LIFE SCIENCES QUARTERLY, a research magazine;

- Valerie King, Julie Miller, Fred Murrell, de Lyra, and Haylor received an award for a series on wildlife enhancement and timber, a set of Cornell Cooperative Extension publications from the department of natural resources;

- Haylor was cited for "Biotechnology: Biology for Economic Development," a special issue of New York's FOOD AND LIFE SCIENCES QUARTERLY prepared to promote Cornell's Biotechnology Program and Institute.

In the electronic media category, the Consumer Information Network, and two radio documentaries -- "Drug Abuse: A One-Way Trip Through Hell" and "Teenage Sexuality: 'You Don't Have to Be in Love to Make Love'" -- received an award. The electronic media entries were produced by Liz Giuliano, Michael Veley, and Gordon Webb of the Consumer Information Network.

In the writing category, Jeanne Mackin of the Consumer News Service was cited for her stories on consumer issues for the News and Feature Service.

At another meeting, Yong H. Kim and Susan S. Lang in the News and Feature Service at Cornell University were cited by the Northeast Farm Communicators Association for excellence in newswriting.

Kim was cited for a feature on a Cornell test involving a new type of pesticide sprayer called "controlled droplet applicator" that could revolutionize the way American farmers spray chemicals to control weeds, insects and diseases.

Lang's award was for a story "promoting agriculture in the Northeast." Her article dealt with the forthcoming "White Revolution" -- an unprecedented transformation of the dairy industry.

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## MEET PLANNED ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE

The Association of U.S. University Directors of International Agricultural Programs and Agricultural Communicators in Education have set Feb. 13-15 for a national conference in St. Louis, entitled "International Agriculture Programs and Agricultural Communications: Partners for International Development."

The primary audience are the deans and directors and other administrators of international agricultural programs at land grant universities and land grant university agricultural communicators interested in and involved with international agricultural development.

Mason Miller of Winrock International, explains that the idea is to explore ways to increase communication impact related to international agricultural programs and projects.

For further information, contact Miller at Winrock International, Route 3, Petit Jean Mountain, Morrilton, AR 72110. His electronic mailbox is 57:AGC017 and his telephone number is (501) 727-5435.

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## NAGC 'COMMUNICATOR' ADVISES COLLEAGUES

The effective delivery of information to the public depends on communicators who possess not only professional competence but integrity and courage, H. Nelson Fitton, Jr., head of the Publishing Division of USDA's Office of Information, said Nov. 16 in accepting his honor as Communicator of the Year bestowed by the National Association of Government Communicators in Washington, D.C.

Fitton quoted Thomas Jefferson:

"Information to the people (is) the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of people...they are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty."

Then Fitton said:

"I believe government communicators can be proud of the way they have diligently met the needs of the public through the press, radio, television, graphics, publications and all other avenues of information transfer.

"Yet their splendid record has been defamed over the years by incessant criticism and ridicule. This criticism has questioned the quality of their work and the strength of their integrity."

Formidable problems lay ahead, he said. These included "greatly slashed budgets, more RIFs and downgrading, increased external control over information activities, and the lingering image of government communicators as 'flicks, flacks and hacks.'"

A former president of NAGC, Fitton advised his colleagues:

"Use our communication ability to state our position on maintaining a strong, responsive Federal information activity that is so essential to participatory democracy.

"Maintain our integrity and the highest professional standards and believe in what we do to counter criticism coming from inside and outside government.

"Oppose needless controls and restrictions that inhibit professional performance, that are destructive to the free flow of information, and that interfere with the public's right to know.

"Work together in our common efforts."

Fitton detailed the problems that have befallen government communicators, then said, "These are just some of the vicissitudes of the times--the kind that have sent shock waves throughout information offices across the country and that have become a weary rehearsal for more of the same.

"I have a nagging feeling that few outside our ranks across the country really care."

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OUTLOOK CONFERENCE DIRECTOR FINDS INTEREST IN '85 FARM BILL

"I find there's a great deal of interest in the 1985 Farm Bill," reports Sally Michael, World Agricultural Outlook Board public affairs officer and director of USDA's 61st annual agricultural outlook conference.

The conference, scheduled for Dec. 3-5 in Washington, D.C., will focus on prospects for the 1985 Farm Bill during its first two days. It will, of course, also examine the outlooks for the economy, agriculture, and trade, as usual.

Michael said about 1,400 persons are expected to attend this year's conference.

Information on Outlook '85 is available by writing: Outlook '85, WAOB/USDA, Room 5143-So., Washington, D.C. 20250 or through Dialcom electronic mailbox AGR072.

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## FARM PRODUCTS GENERIC ADVERTISING PROBED

Generic messages like "the incredible edible egg" and "a day without orange juice is like a day without sunshine" promote a type of food rather than a particular company's product.

Such advertising is studied from a variety of angles in a new booklet published by USDA's Economic Research Service. Rosanna Mentzer Morrison is the author.

The author notes that a 1974 study conducted by the Florida Department of Citrus and the University of Florida concluded that advertising was effective in increasing sales of canned, single-strength grapefruit juice, but that the effectiveness per dollar spent decreased as total expenditures increased.

Expenditures, laws, and unresolved issues are among the subjects covered in the study.

ERS has no copies for free mailing but inquiries about obtaining the publication can be directed to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The publication's identifying number is AIB-481. The GPO order desk phone number is (202) 783-3238.

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## 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE SAFE'

As part of its drive to beef up audio-visual activities, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service has mailed public service scripts to "all" 7,600 radio stations around the country to inform their publics about food safety during the holiday season.

The Thanksgiving messages concern turkey and the Safe Food Book, published by FSIS. The December holiday messages get into food safety at buffets.

FSIS hasn't performed this service for years. Karen Stuck, chief of the information office at FSIS, says the radio scripts fit right into an information program that already includes print materials and television PSA's.

She's querying the stations as to whether they prefer scripts or recordings.

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## IN CASE YOU WERE INTERESTED

According to a Roper survey two years ago, as reported by the Radio and Television Division of USDA's Office of Information:

People get their news 65 percent from television, 44 percent from newspapers, 18 percent from radio and 6 percent from magazines.

And, according to R.H. Bruskin, among Americans 18 years old and older, people divide their media time as follows: television 45 percent, radio 39 percent, newspapers 11 percent and magazines 5 percent.

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INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGRO09 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

